

kathryn root

and

elyakim taussig

~ duo-pianists ~

SUNDAY AFTERNOON
SERIES

NOVEMBER 12, 1972

CONCERT HALL AT 3 P.M.
EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

Nothing Original: a program of piano music which has been arranged, transcribed and plagiarized.

"Hantarish"; discussion with
Boulez and Xenakis (Op. Posth.) 1959

Avil Merodach
(1913-1962)

Merodach, the Israeli composer, maintains a controversial aura around his work, making him an enigmatic and misunderstood figure (not unlike Ives or Varèse). Most of his life he worked practically unnoticed in a small Israeli town where he founded and directed the Israeli Music Research Institute. It was not until after his tragic death in a car accident that most of his works have finally reached the public.

Born in Vienna, Merodach studied with Schoenberg and Webern before settling in Israel in 1933. Later, a great friendship sprang up between him and Oliver Messiaen, whose mysticism influenced Merodach to a certain extent.

The "discussion" for two pianos is one of his last works. It is in four movements; the first serves as an exposition of all the elements included in the other three, such as Xenakian string-like glissandi and blocks of sound; the second, a "scherzo", is a vital outburst of Boulezian networks; the third explores various percussive sounds executed by beaters of differing hardness; the finale is a humorous fantasy on Paganini's caprice "La Chasse". The motto to the third movement (and actually to the whole piece) reads: "Increscunt animi virescit volnere virtus"--the spirit grows, strength is restored by wounding.

It is up to the listener to decipher this dialogue between good friends and colleagues which is carried out in an entirely musical language.

(extracted from program notes to work's performance...
Israeli Music Week, June 1970, Dimona, Israel)

Elizabethan Virginal Duets

La Volta
His Rest (Galiard)
Barafostus' Dreame

William Byrd (1543-1623)
Giles Farnaby (ca.1560-1640)
Anon.

All selections are taken from the most valuable collection of English keyboard music, the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, compiled in 1620. Among these 297 compositions of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century are madrigal transcriptions, fantasies, dances, preludes and many sets of variations.

All three pieces are characterized by short, clear phrases, with some melodic imitation throughout the voices. The third features a more extended theme with three variations, each of which exploits a different figuration; all the while, the same harmonic outline is preserved.

Variations and Fugue on a Theme
by Mozart, Op. 132a

Max Reger
(1873-1916)

Drawing his inspiration from Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Wagner, Hugo Wolf and Brahms, this Bavarian composer may be classified as a post-romantic expressionist. Though working within the bounds of tonality, he managed to combine a highly-thickened Baroque texture along with a contemplative flexible melodic line and a rich chromatic harmony.

Reger cultivated eighteenth century forms; his favorite seems to have been the variation form (with themes borrowed from other composers), since it allowed him to demonstrate his craft to the fullest. The theme borrowed in this case is from the first movement of Mozart's piano sonata K.331. (The original tune is also set by Mozart as a group of variations.)

Reger's setting for piano duo is a concert version and not a reduction of the orchestral score, bearing the same title.

INTERMISSION

Two Jazz Toccatas on Themes
by Bach and Haydn

Henry Brant
(b.1913)

Waltzes, Op. 39

Brahms
(1833-1897)

In its original version for four hands, this work was first published in 1867 and dedicated to the music critic and aesthetician Eduard Hanslick, who held Brahms' work in high esteem. Other critics who had hitherto never been able to find a good word to say about Brahms' serious compositions found themselves praising these waltzes, as Ehlerdt did in 1880: "Dancing may be accomplished in many ways: passionately, indifferently, distractedly or symbolically. The symbolic dancer will introduce in his motions the poetic idea underlying the dance; that is, the fleeting, half-confidential, and yet not binding, contact of one person with another of the opposite sex, a sort of rhythmic dialogue without words. And Brahms possessed the gift of substantiating his mastery in this field by the charm of half-revealed sentiment, by the

modest denial of the scarcely-uttered confession, and by his rendering the wildest yearnings speechless with confusion."

Because of the immense popularity of these waltzes, with their shift from brilliance to sentimentality to humour, several other arrangements were made of them--including one by Brahms, for piano solo.

Variations on a Theme of Paganini
for Two Pianos (1941)

Witold Lutoslawski
(b.1913)

This is one of 200 piano duo compositions written by Lutoslawski during World War II in Warsaw. Even though the city had no orchestra at the time, musicians were still active to some extent, and Lutoslawski's group met in a hall which had two pianos. As a result, a great deal of the classical repertoire was heard in arranged versions for these two pianos. It is remarkable that out of all those compositions, only these Paganini variations have survived.

Lutoslawski had a differing point of view of variations from other composers who had set this same violin Caprice No.24 of Paganini (i.e. Brahms, Rachmaninoff, Blacher, Liszt, etc.). While these other composers set new variations on the original theme, Lutoslawski preferred to write a piano-duo version of Paganini's piece, so that the original violin figurations from each variation remained intact; however Lutoslawski added his own (rather Bartókian) harmonic idiosyncracies. (D.R.C.)

*NEXT EVENT: Saturday, November 18, 1972
University of Toronto
Symphony Orchestra*

*NEXT SUNDAY AFTERNOON SERIES:
December 3, 1972
Lorand Fenyves, violin
John Hawkins, piano
Assisted by Student Ensembles*